

Newington Parks and Recreation Department's Swim Lesson Level Descriptions Revised 9/2009

The Newington Parks and Recreation Department offers six comprehensive course levels that teach how to swim skillfully and safely. Participants must be six years of age to enroll in swim lessons. The prerequisite for each level is the successful completion and/or demonstration of the skills from the preceding level. Each level of Learn-to-Swim includes training in basic water safety and helping a swimmer in distress, in addition to the skills outlined below:

Level 1: (Age 6+)

Purpose: Helps students feel comfortable in the water. Level 1 participants learn to:

- Enter and exit water safely
- Blowing bubbles through nose and mouth for 3 seconds
- Bobbing 3 times
- Submerge mouth (head) independently
- Open eyes underwater, pick up submerged object, at least 2 times
- Front and back glides, 2 body lengths
- Back float, 3 seconds
- Treading water with arm and hand actions (in chest-deep water)
- Swim on front and back using arm/leg actions for 2 body lengths
- Rollover front to back, back to front w/support
- Follow basic water safety rules, helping others
- Use a life jacket

Level 1 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Enter unassisted, move 5 yds, bob 3 times to chin level, safety exit water; 2) Glide on front at least 2 body lengths, roll to float on back for 3 seconds (with support) and recover to a vertical position.

Level 3: Prerequisite: Successful Completion of Level 2

Purpose: Builds on skills from Level 2 & develops strokes through additional guided practice. Level 3 participants learn:

- Jump into deep water from the side
- Dive from sitting and kneeling positions
- Bob to safety, 5 times, in chest-deep water
- Rotary breathing, 10 times.
- Perform front & back float at least 30 seconds
- Tread water, 30 seconds (in deep water)
- Submerge and retrieve an object
- Perform front & back glide w/2 different kicks for 3-5 body lengths
- Perform front crawl and elementary backstroke, 15 yards
- Scissors kick, 10 yards
- Change from horizontal to vertical position on front and back
- Water safety rules, perform a reaching assist

Level 3 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Jump into deep water from the side, swim front crawl for 15 yards, maintain position by treading or floating for 30 seconds and swim elementary backstroke for 15 yards.

Level 2: Prerequisite: Successful Completion of Level 1

Purpose: Gives students independent success with fundamental skills. Level 2 participants learn to:

- Enter water by stepping or jumping from the side, in chest-deep water
- Exit water safely using ladder or side
- Submerge entire head, at least 5 seconds
- Bob 5 times in chest deep water
- Open eyes underwater, pick up a submerged object, at least 2 times in chest-deep water
- Front float, jellyfish float and tuck float – 5 seconds each
- Perform front and back glide, 2 body lengths each
- Back float, 15 seconds
- Recover from a glide or float to a vertical position
- Roll over from front to back, back to front
- Swim on front and back using combined strokes, at least 5 body lengths
- Treading using arms and legs in shoulder-deep water, 15 seconds
- Water safety rules, helping others, swim while wearing a life jacket

Level 2 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Step from side into chest-deep water, move into front float for 5 seconds, roll over to a back float for 5 seconds, return standing position; 2) Move into a back float for 5 seconds, roll to front then recover to a vertical position; 3) Push off & swim using combined arm and leg actions for 5 body lengths on front, roll to back, float for 15 seconds, roll to the front then continue swimming for 5 body lengths.

Level 4: Prerequisite: Successful Completion of Level 3

Purpose: Develops confidence and strength to improve skills learned and introduces new aquatic skills. Level 4 participants learn to:

- Shallow dive or dive from stride and compact position
- Swim underwater, 3-5 body lengths
- Survival swimming, 30 seconds in deep water
- Perform feet-first surface dive
- Perform front crawl and backstroke open turns
- Tread water using two different kicks, two minutes.
- Push off in a streamlined position and kick for 3-5 body lengths
- Use safe diving rules, water safety rules, perform a throwing assist
- Perform the following:
 - Front and elementary backstroke, 25 yards
 - Breaststroke & backstroke, 15 yards
 - Butterfly & sidestroke, 15 yards

Level 4 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Perform a feet-first entry into deep water, swim front crawl for 25 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 25 yards; 2) Swim breaststroke for 15 yards, change direction and position as necessary and swim back crawl for 15 yards.

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Level 5: Prerequisite: Successful Completion of Level 4

Purpose: Provides further coordination and refinement of strokes, swimming further distances. Level 5 participants learn to:

- Tread water, 5 minutes
- Water safety, helping others, rescue breathing
- Perform the following:
 - Shallow dive, glide two body lengths and begin any front stroke
 - Standard scull, 30 seconds
 - Tuck & pike surface dive
 - Front and back flip turns
 - Front crawl and elementary backstroke, 50 yards
 - Butterfly, sidestroke, back crawl, breaststroke, 25 yards

Level 5 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Perform a shallow dive into deep water, swim front crawl for 50 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim elementary backstroke for 50 yards; 2) Swim breaststroke for 25 yards, change direction and position of travel as necessary and swim back crawl for 25 yards.

Level 6 – Fitness Swimmer: Prerequisite: Successful Completion of Level 5

Purpose: Refines the strokes so students swim them with ease, efficiency, power and smoothness over greater distances. Level 6 participants learn to:

- Front crawl and elementary backstroke, 100 yards
- Back crawl, breaststroke, sidestroke and butterfly, 50 yards
- Front crawl and backstroke open turns and flip turns
- Sidestroke, breaststroke and butterfly turns
- Circle swimming
- Using a pace clock
- Using pull buoys, fins and paddles, 25 yards each

Level 6 Exit Skills Assessment: 1) Swim 500 yards continuously using any 3 strokes of participant's choice, swimming at least 50 yards of each stroke; 2) Perform the Cooper 12-minute swim test, and compare results with the preassessment results.

Which Level is right for me or my child?

Choose the Learn-to-Swim level that best matches you or your child's "learn-to-swim" needs. Level 1 is for beginners (minimum age 6) with little or no experience in the water. To enroll into Levels 2-6, students must have completed or at least be able to confidently demonstrate the skills listed in the previous level, including the exit skill requirements. Contact our office at (860) 665-8666 or use the learn-to-swim skills list as a guide to help you determine the appropriate level if skills cannot be assessed before swim lesson registration.

How many lessons will it take for my child to "swim"?

Learning skills varies among children. Readiness is influenced by physical development, previous experiences, home environment, parental attitudes and individual preferences. For most skills, there are simple prerequisites, activities and lead-ups that can prepare the child to perform those skills. It may take many lessons before a child can swim independently. Year-round practice, regular (supervised) exposure to water and positive encouragement are ways parents can help their child to progress. To make sure your child does learn to swim well, be sure they complete all of the learn-to-swim levels.



Waterbabies is for children 6 months to 2 years of age who are not yet ready to be in swim lessons without a parent. The program builds swimming readiness while emphasizing fun in the water. Parents & children participate in several guided practice sessions that help children learn elementary skills, including bubble blowing, front & back kicking & floating and experience underwater exploration and more. Once children can perform basic skills without parental assistance, they may begin Learn-to-Swim courses. **Waterbabies classes are not currently offered during the indoor season.**

Preschool is for children 3 – 5 years of age who are ready to be in swim lessons without a parent. The program builds swimming readiness while emphasizing fun in the water. Children participate in several guided practice sessions that help them learn elementary skills, including bubble blowing, front and back kicking and floating and experience underwater exploration and more. Once children are 6 years of age and perform skills comfortably in the water, they may begin Learn-to-Swim courses, starting with Level 1 when they are 6 years of age. **Preschool is not currently offered during the indoor season, however, we do offer a Preschool & Parent class for 3-5 year olds with a parent.**

You may contact us at (860) 665-8666 for more information on any of our swim lesson programs.